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SUBJECT: CHAD'S POSITION ON A UN BORDER FORCE HARDENING
FURTHER

REF: NDJAMENA 176

¶1. (U) On February 28 the Ambassador was called to the Foreign Ministry to receive a statement from Acting Foreign Minister Djidda Moussa Outman clarifying Chad's reservations on proposals by the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UNDPKO) to the UN Security Council (UNSC) for a peacekeeping operation in eastern Chad. Djidda said he was presenting the same statement to other UNSC members represented in Ndjamena (i.e., France, China, Russia).

¶2. (SBU) Recalling discussions with the UNDPKO Technical Assistance Mission during its recent visit, Djidda said Chad had proposed a force of police and gendarmes units with a mandate to protect refugees and humanitarian workers. He noted disagreement with the UNDPKO's proposals for a force with as many 11,000 personnel, a broader mandate, and significant military elements. He added that it is unacceptable to have the 12 Sudanese refugee camps so close to the border with Sudan. He referred to studies underway with UNHCR on proposals to shift the camps further into Chad. He said the UNSC should take note of these discussions and asked the Ambassador to draw Washington's attention to Chad's concerns.

¶3. (SBU) Probed further on Chad's views, Djidda expressed hope that the mandate for a force would include protection of Chadian IDP's. He rejected consideration of any military elements, claiming that a civilian force of police and gendarmes would be sufficient. He noted Chad's support for a force with aerial surveillance capabilities, but did not see the possibility of establishing observation posts along the border. He said a Sudanese military delegation is in Ndjamena now for technical discussions on implementing the Tripoli agreement of February 2006, which was reaffirmed at the meetings in Tripoli last week and which includes plans for a joint Chado-Sudanese border force. Chad, Djidda noted, is ready to contribute to this force, but the "other party" has been the obstacle.

¶4. (SBU) The Ambassador told Djidda the United States shared Chad's concerns with insecurity on its border and violence against civilian populations. He said the United States supports an international force on the border as a way of addressing this problem. He described U.S. efforts for peace in Darfur, including support for a hybrid force. He urged Chad to work with the United States and its international partners on plans for an effective and acceptable force in eastern Chad.

¶5. (SBU) Comment: As noted in ref and previous messages, Chad's reservations about a UN force on its border are becoming more entrenched. Discussions in New York need to take note of its concerns and consider steps to assuage them. We have also been hearing frustrations voiced with increasing frequency over the continuing presence of the camps for Sudanese refugees in eastern Chad. Two of them --

Ore Cassoni near Bahai and Am Nabak near Tine -- are indeed unacceptably close to the border, and UNHCR has been working to identify suitable sites for their relocation, so far without success. Moving the other camps would pose even more daunting challenges. End Comment
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